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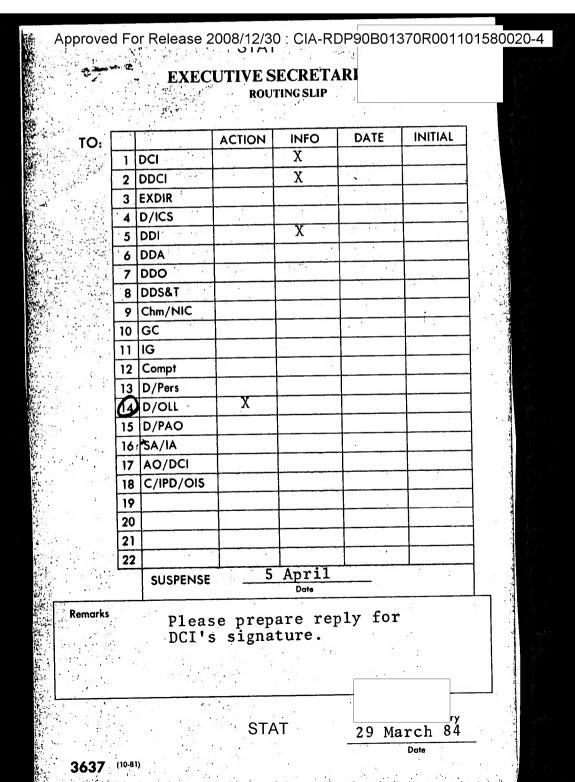
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OLL 84-1353

Office of Legislative Liaison Routing Slip

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Chrono

March 28, 1984

Executive Registry

84-14-53

The Honorable William J. Casey Director, Central Intelligence Agency Washington, D.C. 20505

oll # 84-1353

Dear Bill:

We are concerned about press reports that NATO recently endorsed new estimates of the Soviet defense budget which reduced previous estimates of the real growth in overall Soviet defense spending from four to five percent per year down to as low as 2.5%.

We would appreciate receiving from you an unclassified explanation of whether the growth in Soviet defense spending has actually reduced by as much as fifty percent, whether the previous estimates were correct or not, and any errors or misunderstandings that may exist about the quality of accurate estimates of Soviet defense spending.

We are sure you appreciate the difficulty in persuading our colleagues in the Senate to support the President's request for a ten percent real growth in our defense budget a few weeks after NATO and the U.S. intelligence community have apparently endorsed a fifty percent "cut" in estimated Soviet defense spending.

Thank you for your assistance.

Warmest personal regards,

Jesse Helms

Thurmon

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